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Ms Katey Thompson
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Dear Ms Thompson

Short inspection of Hart Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have maintained strong teamwork across the school, and staff morale is high. You have developed the curriculum, which is now based on children's interests rather than topics. This captures their imaginations and develops curiosity in their learning. Furthermore, you have developed the learning environment indoors and outdoors further, which is enabling children to develop their curiosity and imagination. I saw children enthusiastically exploring the woodland area and enjoying using the new outdoor play equipment. Your new leaders have continued to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good. You enjoy the confidence of parents, which is reflected in their overwhelmingly positive responses in the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and their text responses during the inspection. One parent wrote, 'This is a brilliant nursery school where my child is safe, happy and making good progress; the staff are very caring.' This comment was typical of those received.

Your new leaders and governors share your commitment and drive for continuous improvement. Governors are regular visitors to the school, and are holding leaders to account for its work. They have ensured that you have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You have improved children's thinking and language development by building staff confidence in the use of signing and verbalisation, by introducing songs and rhymes and by providing activities throughout the day that include rich opportunities for language development. You rightly recognise the need to ensure children develop their speaking skills further. You have also provided a larger classroom for the two-year-

old 'Little Harts' children, with more resources for them to explore through play and develop their curiosity. Leaders have strengthened the systems for tracking the progress of children with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in the resource base. As a result, staff have a more accurate view of the progress these children are making. In our discussions during the inspection, you had a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development, which you include in your school improvement plan. However, these are not fully reflected in your self-evaluation documents. You have developed firm links with the community and with local schools for the benefit of pupils. These developments are clearly demonstrating the capacity for further improvement.

Children greatly enjoy school, which is reflected in the good attitudes to learning and their good behaviour and attendance. They take a great pride in their achievements. Children learn about different cultures and religious beliefs through the celebration of festivals such as Eid, Diwali and Christmas, and through the good role models provided by your culturally diverse staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was seen in their growing confidence in learning and in their willingness to take responsibilities as classroom helpers and their consideration of the needs of others.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors are ensuring that all policies for safeguarding and procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children are implemented effectively. Staff benefit from regularly updated training to enhance their skills in promoting the welfare and safety of children. Through your recent joint audit of safeguarding across the school with the chair of governors, you have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Children stay safe in school, and move from one activity to another safely. Parents and staff agree that children are safe and that there is no bullying in school. Staff rigorously assess any potential risks to children's safety. As a result, children feel safe and happy at school.

Inspection findings

- To demonstrate that the school remains good, I wanted to determine how well staff are using assessment information, particularly on children in the resource base, to track progress. This was an area identified for improvement at the last inspection. There was also little up-to-date information about children's progress on the school's website. I found that leaders have strengthened assessment systems, particularly in the resource base, where the assessment information informs the next steps in children's individual education plans.
- Learning journeys for all children have been greatly improved, enabling staff to see at a glance how much progress each child is making in all areas of learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the learning journeys, which they do informally and also more formally every half term. Children's progress is now measured against the stages of development in each area of learning they reach

over time. This data is analysed every half term by the leaders responsible for different areas of learning. Senior leaders then check the accuracy of this data every term, and teacher assessments are moderated closely by the local authority for accuracy. As a result, all staff have a clear view of the progress children are making. Leaders rightly recognise that the new systems for assessing the progress of children in the resource base have yet to be embedded in practice.

- I also wanted to find out if good learning and progress were being maintained as a result of good teaching across the school. This was because there was little up-to-date information on the impact of teaching on children's learning and progress. Your accurate data clearly shows that children are continuing to make at least good progress from their starting points as a result of good teaching. Teachers use their knowledge of children's prior learning well to plan effectively. As a result, staff accommodate the different learning needs of all groups of children, including those at an early stage of learning English. Your data shows how effectively staff have narrowed the gap in the progress made by White British boys, who had fallen behind other children, and their peers. Your teachers successfully achieved this through effective, targeted support.
- Teachers have also narrowed the gap between the achievement of boys and girls, and you have ensured that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to enable disadvantaged children to make similarly good progress to other groups of children. Teachers and support assistants are enabling children with SEN and/or disabilities in the resource base to make rapid progress in a short period of time, so they successfully learn alongside their peers in the mainstream nursery classes. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning, although the school rightly recognises that their progress in speaking is not quite as strong as their progress in other areas of learning.
- Finally, I wanted to determine how effectively the new leadership team was continuing to drive improvements forward. This was because the members of the leadership team are new to their roles. In addition, some aspects of the website did not comply with requirements. I found that the drive and commitment for continuous improvement by the new leadership team were clearly evident in the positive changes that members have made to the curriculum, in strengthening assessment and in developing strong links with other schools, parents and the community. You have improved support for families by doubling the number of family workers and support workers, and providing more opportunities for increasing the skills of parents to support children's learning at home. You have worked closely with the local authority in the training and development of middle leaders, so they are now more confident in the use of the new assessment system to ensure that staff accurately track progress in each area of learning.
- During the inspection, you worked closely with other leaders and school governors to ensure the website was up to date. You have an accurate view of the school and recognise that self-evaluation needs strengthening so it is less descriptive and more analytical of the impact of the school's work. New leaders have not fully addressed their areas for improvement relating to embedding the new assessment systems for children with SEN and/or disabilities or developing children's speaking skills further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- strengthen self-evaluation by ensuring your views of the quality of school's work and children's outcomes are clearly based on the outcomes of all monitoring activities
- implement the plans to embed the new assessment system for children who have SEN and/or disabilities and to further develop children's speaking skills.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Luton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other school leaders, three governors and a representative of the local authority. I carried out joint visits with you to all nursery classes and the resource base for children who have SEN and/or disabilities, talking to children informally about their learning. I looked at samples of children's work in their learning journeys and observed children using phonics for reading simple words. I took account of the 22 responses for parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their 17 text responses. I also looked at the 14 online questionnaire responses from staff. I looked at a range of documentation including: your safeguarding policies and procedures; your self-evaluation document and school development plan; minutes of governing body meetings, attendance figures and records of behaviour; and the school's information about the progress children are making.